

Hoosier Folklore

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CONTENTS

- Slovenian Folklore in Indianapolis
Margaret Montgomery 121
- The Pack Peddler . Ruby Stainbrook Butler 133
- Folklore News 137
- Folklore from Socorro, New Mexico
Dorothy J. Baylor 138
- Notes
- Old Man Edmonds
Ruby Stainbrook Butler 151
- The Little Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly
Lee Martin, Eva H. McIntosh, Mildred
Newcomb 153
- Fast Squirrels Martha Heflin 156
- Book Reviews 157

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HOOSIER FOLKLORE

VOL. VI DECEMBER, 1947

No. 4

SLOVENIAN FOLKLORE IN INDIANAPOLIS

By MARGARET MONTGOMERY

I believe there must be a gold mine of folklore in west Indianapolis, where approximately 500 Catholic Slovenes live in a section consisting of about five square blocks. There are also a few Croats, Slovaks, Bulgars, Serbs, Hungarians, and surprisingly enough in this Balkan neighborhood, one Danish family. The older people, all of peasant stock, are the farmers, blacksmiths, and mechanics who came from small towns or rural communities of Yugoslavia to make their living in this country. They began settling in this part of the city in the early 1900's. Their principal buildings are the Catholic church and school, the Christamore Settlement, and the National Slovenian Home. In order to finance the latter—a large brick structure with modernistic bar, dance hall, and auditorium—stock certificates were sold. Only families in which at least one member was a Slovene could buy stock, and this stock was not transferable. They have now completely paid for the hall, which was formally dedicated in 1940. It is a popular center for all sorts of activities: plays, dramatized fairy tales presented in costume and in the native tongue, wedding parties, and dances.

Last spring through the director of Christamore Settlement I met two young Slovenian housewives, who have been very kind in supplying me with information. I am particularly indebted to Mrs. Reinhold, who has been willing to record for me in writing some of the customs and popular stories.

Her mother deserves special mention. Shortly after World War I she came to America, where she met the Slovene, a member of the Indianapolis colony, who became her husband. She taught her two daughters Slovenian. The girls did not know English when they entered public grade school and were very much embarrassed at the cries of "Hunyak," with which American children taunted them. Since they were not allowed to speak nor practice English at home, school life was far from easy. As long as they were under the parental roof, old-world customs were scrupulously observed. Mrs. Reinhold's husband, of German ancestry, is only mildly interested in and tolerant of Yugoslavian traditions. Except in families where all members are Slovenian old customs are gradually giving place to new.

CHRISTMAS SEASON

(Mrs. Reinhold's recollections of childhood celebrations)

On Christmas Eve it was customary for each child to set a plate on the table before going to bed. The next morning young children would find apples, cookies, walnuts, and a switch on the plate. (Incidentally, the switches were hung up in the kitchen, and when a child was punished, he had to get his own switch for his parent to use.) School children would receive, in addition to the fruit and switches, pencils and tablets. Older girls got hose, head kerchiefs, aprons; older boys, bandanas, hose, and knives. In Slovenia this same kind of gift exchange takes place on December 5, the night before St. Nicholas' Day, and there are no presents given on Christmas. Here, however, Slovenian children would be too disappointed not to have gifts as their American friends do.

The day before Christmas is a day of fasting. After chores are finished, and everyone is dressed in his Sunday best, all kneel and pray the rosary three times. Then a light supper is served, consisting of coffee, milk, or wine, *potica*, and English walnuts. After eating, the family prepares the crèche on a shelf which is always built in a corner of the room for that purpose. Moss is laid down first, then the stable with the manger and the figures and animals. Small candles are placed around and lighted. Today virtually every family still has the crèche, but Christmas tree lights are used as a precaution against fire. Some of the people had paper angels

that could be folded flat and used from year to year. These angels formed a circle around the candles. Either the way they were made or the heat of the candles made them flutter, much to the children's delight. This crèche took the place of our tree, but today Slovenians usually have both.

On Christmas Eve not even the children go to bed. There is an exchange of neighborly visits. At virtually every house there is a lot of dancing and singing to the music of the harmonica (accordion). It is a gay time. At four A.M. a huge breakfast is served. After a little rest and completion of chores they are ready for a huge noon dinner. There are several kinds of meat, individual loaves of bread, *poticas* with different fillings, such as nuts and raisins, cottage cheese, cracklings, and poppy seeds. Plates are filled and heaped high with a piece or slice of each kind of food on the table. There is no hurry about eating; in fact, the one who can make his food last the longest is supposed to be the thriftiest. What he can't eat is hidden, and there is fun finding and stealing the food.

In the afternoon there is more dancing and singing. Then a light supper is served, and the glorious holiday is over.

NAME DAYS

In Yugoslavia celebration of name days takes the place of our birthday parties, for a Slovene who has the same name as one of the saints honors his saint's day. Friends come to visit, and they are served wine and small cookies. Today in Indianapolis, Slovenian children have parties and receive gifts on their birthdays, and they also get inexpensive gifts on their name days. A switch accompanies the presents. Instead of the playful paddling American children are apt to get for each year, Slovenes use a small twig or switch. Sometimes games are played. A favorite pastime is to have each one sing, tell a story, or give a recitation. (Mrs. Reinhold added that on a visit to Slovenia in 1938, she and her sister made a big hit with their American songs when it came their turn to entertain.)

EASTER

Holidays are always the occasion for extra food. On Good Friday dumplings made of cottage cheese are a favorite.

The cheese is spread on dough which is covered with beaten egg. This is rolled and boiled in salt water for one-half hour. It is then cut into thick slices and covered with brown, buttered crumbs.

On Holy Saturday Evening the Slovenes go to church with their baskets of food for the priest to bless. The baskets, all covered with their best embroidered towels and linen, contain their favorite Easter food: ham or homemade sausage and the *potica*. The Indianapolis colony depends upon Cleveland butchers to supply this special sausage, a pig's stomach stuffed with meat, something like salami. On Easter Sunday at breakfast this sausage that has been blessed by the priest is broken and passed to each member of the family. Incidentally when a hog is butchered in the late fall, every piece is designated for a certain holiday or gathering, such as, a ham and sausage for Easter, a ham for Christmas, ribs for Ascension Day, another piece for hay-gathering time, and another for the day before Ash Wednesday. This custom is observed in Cleveland today, where there is a very large Yugoslavian community—large enough that Slovenian is taught in their schools.

RECIPES

Potica

(I have not been able to verify the spelling; the nearest is *pateska*-pie—in a Croatian dictionary.)

Perhaps the most important food not only for Easter but for all holidays and special occasions is the *potica*. The homemade variety is far superior to that sold in the neighborhood restaurant. Mrs. Stroy said her mother never put it into the oven without first making the sign of the cross. Mrs. Reinhold mixes the dough in a dish pan and rolls it out on a table, for ordinary pans and breadboards are too small. Mrs. Reinhold obtained the following recipe from her mother.

- 3 lbs. flour
- ½ can Wilson's condensed milk
(In Yugoslavia real cream
is used)
- 6 eggs
- 1 stick butter
- ¾ cup sugar

5 cents yeast from bakery
1½ cups warm water
1 jigger whisky
salt

Dissolve yeast in ½ cup warm water. Thicken with flour and let rise in warm place. Sift together flour, sugar, and salt. Beat together eggs, melted butter, and whisky. Mix milk and rest of water and add to flour. Stir slightly. Add yeast mixture and beat till thoroughly elastic. Let stand in warm place, covered, till double in bulk.

Filling for Potica

3 lbs. walnuts
grated rind of one lemon
about one cup honey
½ lb. raisins
about 2 cups sugar

Grind nut meats. Roll dough one-half inch thick on floured cloth. Spread honey lightly on dough. Spread nut meats evenly over honey. Add raisins, then sugar, lemon rind, and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon. Roll up tightly like a jelly roll, coil and place in a very well-greased baking pan. Let rise till double in bulk. Brush with beaten egg just before putting into oven. Bake at 300 degrees till light brown. Reduce heat to 275 degrees till done (about one hour total baking time).

This recipe will serve about two dozen people. For weddings sometimes as many as twenty-five *poticas* are baked.

Raisin Soup

From Mrs. Fon.

Boil one quart of water. Brown bread crumbs. Put them into boiling water with beaten egg and one-fourth to one-half cup of raisins. Season.

Mrs. Fon added that often they were unable to add raisins because they were too expensive.

FOLKTALES

Mrs. Reinhold says that her godmother knows many of the popular old stories which she used to tell the children in the family. She asked her godmother to write two of her favorites for me, "The Master Thief" and "The Three Wolves."

As Dr. Thompson states,¹ "The Master Thief" (Type 1525) is a framework for a group of related stories (Type 1525A). In this Balkan version the familiar motifs are (1) the stealing of the cow through the trick of the shoes (Type 1525D), (2) the stealing of the ring and sheets, and (3) the use of the sack. It has an unusually dramatic conclusion with its combination of the duping of the priest into a humiliating position and the end-of-the-world motifs.

1. *The Master Thief*

Mr. Vidar has three sons and a large farm. Wondering to which he should leave the farm after his death, he decided to test their judgment.

The eldest son, John, went with his father first. The son was to choose which tree was to be cut down for kindling. After looking around awhile, John pointed to a large tree.

"Let's cut down that tree. It is a large one, and big enough to supply kindling—all we will need—for the entire winter."

The father said nothing, but went back to the house for the second son, Karl.

Karl picked out a tree that was gnarled and twisted. "That tree will make good kindling but wouldn't bring much money as lumber."

While the third son, Cvetko, and the father were going to the woods, they saw a man leading his cow home from pasture. "I know how to steal that man's cow," he said to his father. Cvetko removed his shoes. One shoe he filled with mud and ran ahead, around to a turn in the road. There he left the muddy shoe. The other he left farther up the road and clean.

The man with the cow came to the muddy shoe. Looking at it, he said, "A good shoe, even if it is dirty. But one shoe isn't much good." He was surprised to find the second shoe. "Well, now. Here is the other shoe, and just my size. I'll just tie my cow to this tree and go after the other muddy shoe." While the man went after the first shoe, Cvetko untied the cow and brought it home.

Soon the news of the theft spread through the countryside, and he was nicknamed the "Master Thief." One day

¹ Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York, 1946) 174 ff.

after the theft, rich Mr. Paulin met Mr. Vidar. He laughed at the son's joke and said, "I'll give your son \$300 if he can steal my large diamond tonight."

Mr. Vidar told his son about the meeting with the rich man. Cvetko hid under the rich man's bed that afternoon. As Mr. Paulin and his wife were retiring, they decided to each wear the ring for an hour and pass it to the other. Mrs. Paulin fell asleep and didn't hear her husband tell her he was giving her the ring. That was the Master Thief's chance. He took the ring. The next morning Mr. Paulin was very much surprised to find that his wife didn't have the ring. When he went to Mr. Vidar, he found him laughing. He got the ring back for the \$300 he had promised.

Mr. Paulin said, "If your son can steal my best linen sheets off my bed tonight, I'll pay you \$300. Before Mr. Paulin went to bed that night, the Master Thief was already hidden under his bed with a covered pail. After the rich man was asleep, the thief opened the pail and spread manure between the sheets. Before very long Mr. Paulin was awake and very angry. He took the sheets off the bed and threw them in the corner. The thief picked them up and went home. Again he had to pay the money to get the sheets back.

"This is too much! If you can steal my best horse, I'll pay you another \$300, Master Thief." That night Mr. Paulin placed guards all around the barn, and one guard sitting on the horse.

This wasn't too hard for the thief. He dressed himself as a vagabond with a small keg of cognac strapped to his back. This he was selling by the drink. He doped the cognac and strolled by the barn.

"What are you guarding?" he asked one of the guards.

"A rich man's horse. We have to guard him all night."

"Would it be all right if I stayed with you? You need company. Besides I'm selling cognac and maybe the guards will buy some," the thief said to the guard. All the guards, including the one on the horse had a drink, and soon were all asleep. The Master Thief led the horse home and got the \$300.

"If you can steal my best wine, I'll pay you another \$300. You can have any barrel of wine, but my prize wine," the

rich man said, getting angrier at every joke and determined to get even.

Cvetko went to the rich man's home. The butler took him to the wine cellar. It was full of barrels of good wine, and by itself in one corner, the prize wine of the rich man. After sampling wine from several barrels, he appeared to stumble and knock a spigot from the largest barrel. In order to stop the flow of wine, the butler put his finger in the hole. While he was crouched on the floor, the Master Thief beat him. As this was going on, the master of the home was walking by the basement window. Hearing the commotion and mistaking the thief getting the beating instead of the butler, he called down, "Ha! So you are finally getting it!"

"Yes, I am," answered the thief. The butler was unconscious now. The thief drank the good prize wine and left the spigot open. Then he stuffed a slab of cured bacon on his back under his shirt. When Mr. Paulin saw him leaving, he thought he was beaten up and swollen. When the butler regained consciousness and called for help, the rich man realized he had been outwitted again.

By now all the countryside was laughing at Mr. Paulin, and being broadminded, he took it good-naturedly till the priest of his church was laughing at him and making fun of him.

He thought and thought till he finally devised a plan to get even with the priest. So he talked the Master Thief into his plan. He was having a large party with music and dancing at his home on Saturday night. He would pay the Master Thief \$600 if he would bring the priest to his party in his underwear. He wanted to ridicule the priest in his underwear.

Cvetko started on his plan too. First he went to the creek and caught a lot of crayfish. Then he got small candles and took both to the church after dark. He inserted the candles between the pincers of the crayfish and lit them, and released them on the church floor. Then he went to the pulpit and started preaching. "The end of the world is coming! Whoever wants to go to heaven, now is the time for confession." On and on he talked. The janitor, who had come to ready the church for early morning services, was terribly

frightened and rushed to the parish house to call the priest. The cook answered the door. On hearing the story, she rushed to the church while the janitor went to get the priest from his bed.

The frightened cook went to the church where the Master Thief, disguised as a priest, promptly urged her to confession before he took her to heaven. After listening to her for a few minutes, he started asking her questions about the priest for whom she was working. One question was about how much he had. She told how much he had.

When the priest came, he found the moving candles all over the church floor and the cook praying. The Master Thief talked him into confession and when the real priest wouldn't tell him how much money he had, the Master Thief told him. That made the real priest think the fake must really know about the end of the world coming at any moment.

He made both the cook and priest take off their clothing, and he put the cook and priest into sacks. As he dragged the sacks along the road, they cried out at every bump. The Master Thief merely assured them that they were going to heaven, but the road was a hard and stony one. As they neared the rich man's house, they could hear music, laughter, and singing. They were dragged up the steps and into the ballroom.

There for all to see, the sacks were opened, and the priest and cook dashed home when they realized they had been fooled.

And so the rich man had his revenge, the Master Thief had \$1800, Karl, his next brother, had the farm, and the oldest son, John, nothing, since he would probably lose all he would get anyway.

2. *The Three Wolves*

(The story of "The Three Wolves" revolves around the motif, The Maiden Who Seeks Her Brother (Type 451). Although the introduction and some of the motifs of this version differ from those mentioned in *The Folktale*,² there are many well-known incidents. In a magic ring drawn by her brothers who have been transformed into wolves, the

² Stith Thompson, *The Folktale*, 110 ff.

faithful sister pledges her word that she will remain speechless seven years. She marries a king. On the birth of her children, they are taken away from her by her husband's stepmother, who substitutes animals for the children. Just as she is about to be burned at the stake, the three brothers ride up, one at a time. Each has one of the stolen children. The story ends happily, with the three brothers returning to their mother, Tina and her three sons to the king, and the stepmother burned at the stake.)

The Three Wolves

(Mrs. Reinhold's note: The story had been told so often and handed down from one generation to the next that it was told as a true story.)

This family had three sons. One day the mother baked bread and left the loaves on the table to cool. She went to the fields to work. While she was gone, the boys peeled the crust off all the loaves of freshly baked bread.

The tired mother came home, shocked at what she found. Angry, she cried at the boys, "You dirty wolves!" Then before her horrified eyes, the boys turned to wolves and ran for the woods. The wolves only came back once a year to look around, and then ran back to the woods.

A few years later a daughter was born. As she grew older, she began to notice that her mother cried a lot, and she began asking questions. Her mother just avoided giving her the right answers.

When the daughter, Tina, was about fifteen, she decided to find out once and for all why her mother cried. At first the mother refused to tell her. But when the daughter threatened to run away, she was told the whole story of her brothers.

Tina decided to go to the woods and try to bring back her brothers. A heavy storm breaks just as she reaches the forest and she seeks shelter in a large cave. While she waits for the storm to abate, she looks around in the cave. She found three loaves of bread, three knives, and three bloody shirts. Being hungry, she cut a piece of bread from each of the loaves and ate it. By now the storm is over. She took the three shirts to the creek close by and washed them.

After hanging them to dry on low-hanging tree branches, Tina returned to the cave and hid.

Soon the three wolves who lived in the cave returned. The biggest wolf immediately noticed that someone had been there.

The second wolf wondered who it was. The third one ventured a guess, "It might be our sister."

"Let's tear her to pieces," said the first wolf.

"No, let's just spank her for going so far from home," said the second.

"If it is our sister, we shouldn't harm her. Maybe she can help us. It is no fault of hers, this terrible thing that has happened to us," said the third.

Tina came from her hiding place and told them about home, and how sad their mother was.

The third wolf said, "If you will trust us, you can help us to come back home to our mother." He drew a circle around her and before the three of them she took an oath that she wouldn't speak a single word for three years.

There were rich people hunting in the woods, and one of the young men falls in love with her at first sight. At all his questions she merely nodded or shook her head for answer. All this time and the courting time, she spent inside the circle marked on the ground.

José, the rich boy, had a stepmother, who was very displeased at his bringing home a young wife who refused to speak.

Before the first year of their marriage a baby was born. Shortly before the birth of the baby, the father, José, was called away on business.

When the baby was born, the stepmother took the baby and threw him into the creek in the woods. She saw a wolf take the baby and was glad the baby would be gone for good. To Tina the stepmother gave a puppy and told her that it was hers. She also wrote to José and told him about the puppy.

José couldn't understand what had happened and was very pleased when another baby was due about a year later. Again he was called away just before the baby was born. The stepmother took the baby to the woods again. When she threw the baby into the water, she saw a wolf run into the

water and carry the child away.

This time Tina was shown a kitten and told it was hers. The husband took the news very calmly, but he couldn't understand why such a thing would happen to him and his lovely Tina.

When the third baby boy was born a year later while the young father was away, he decided to leave his wife for good. However, he wanted to ask her why the three babies turned to puppies and a kitten.

Of course, hating Tina as she did, the stepmother had told all the neighbors that Tina was a witch; otherwise she would have borne children as other women did. The people decided to burn her at the stake after the third birth. The stepmother had again substituted a puppy for the baby boy.

José arrived home just as his wife was being driven to a field to be burned at the stake. Just as he reaches her, they hear horses running. Soon a young man on a horse rides up to them. Sitting on the horse with the young man is a little boy about two years old.

The young man on the horse asks Tina, "Who am I?"

"You are my oldest brother, Franc," she answered.

"And who is this little boy?" he asks.

"That is my first son," she replied.

Then another horseman rides up with a little boy about a year old. They are her second brother, Sylvester, and Tina's second son. The third horse rides up with her third brother, Ciral, and her baby son.

The angry crowd listens as Tina tells her story, of the brothers turning to wolves and how the stepmother stole her babies.

The crowd turned on the stepmother, and she was burned at the stake as a witch.

The three brothers went home to their mother, and Tina and her three sons went to their home for a very happy life together.

Indianapolis, Indiana

THE PACK PEDDLER

By RUBY STAINBROOK BUTLER

My childhood was spent on a fertile Johnson County farm, two miles north of Franklin, Indiana, on the Graham road. Our two-story, white frame house, fronting the east, stood on a wooded knoll about a half mile from the public highway. Secluded as we were, my three brothers, two sisters and I were almost wholly dependent upon each other for companionship, except when we had guests or were in school; so it was a joyous occasion, indeed, when Mr. Kane, the Irish pack peddler, came to our house.

Mr. Kane visited us at irregular intervals during all seasons of the year, but I remember best the idle, languorous summer dusks when, just as the fireflies began to rise above the ripened wheat in the north forty and Shep was sent to the woods pasture to bring up the cows, we would see the pack peddler plodding steadily northward on the Graham road, his strong back stooped with the weight of his merchandise. We'd rush to the front yard gate and wait, in happy anticipation, as he turned in our lane and began the long approach to the house. Mr. Kane was coming! We knew him only as Mr. Kane. Shep would loiter at his task and bark an emphatic welcome, for our big, tawny collie knew Mr. Kane too and liked him as we did.

Mr. Kane was about five feet, ten inches tall, stocky, large-boned and in good flesh. The natural ruddiness of his oval features was shaded deeper from incessant exposure to sun, wind and cold. His eyes were the kindly, interested blue of the native Irishman. His thick eyebrows and neatly tended hair were iron gray. Mr. Kane had emigrated from Ireland while still a boy, become a naturalized citizen of the United States, and spent most of his life in Indiana. He was well-dressed, well-educated, cultured; but through the constant use of a blue bandana handkerchief he became one with his clientele. This subtle method of associating himself with the Hoosier farmers upon whom he depended for a livelihood

marked him as an expert and thoroughly experienced salesman. He walked hundreds of miles yearly throughout central Indiana. In his prime, he established regular routes and regular customers whose needs were of gravest concern to him and which he attempted to meet with conscientious efficiency.

Arriving at our front yard, Mr. Kane would greet us with self-contained pleasure. His blue eyes would twinkle with kindness and affection for us, his young friends. He always acted as if he had a surprise for us and he usually did. As we went with him up the hill and around the cool, mossy, brick walk to the north entrance of the house, we would try modestly not to show that we knew this. But to us he was Santa Claus in the flesh—Christmas the whole year through.

My mother was usually at the door to receive him. She too was Irish, and there was a warm bond of mutual interest between them. The ritual was always the same. Mr. Kane would say that he'd been passing by, it was growing late, would it be possible for him to stay all night? My mother would assure him that he was most welcome to stay. She'd invite him in and he would take the huge, waterproof, blue denim pack from his weary shoulders and place it in one corner of the sitting room. There it would remain to excite and discipline us until the following morning when Mr. Kane would open it to display his wares.

Meanwhile Mr. Kane was our guest and we youngsters did our best to make him comfortable and entertain him. When the evening meal was served there were usually eleven of us at the table, including Mr. Kane. In addition to my father, mother, brothers, sisters and myself there were the hired man and hired girl who ate with us in typical country style and who were welcome additions to our family circle. Mr. Kane seemed to delight both in our numbers and our companionship. My father and the pack peddler enjoyed each other, for both preferred politics to any other table topic. Mr. Kane was well informed on subjects of national and international interest. He was a devout Christian and liked to discuss religion. He never gossiped nor carried other information from house to house. In fact, we never knew from whose home he had come nor where he was going when he left our farm. With true Irish blarney he praised my

mother's cooking. With equal blarney she praised his fine appetite and urged him to take many extra servings of his favorite foods. This he would do, expressing gratitude for our hospitality and the taste of home life we gave him. Sometimes, as he talked, his eyes would grow moist, and we felt sure he must be lonely.

The evening usually passed all too quickly with music, games or interesting conversation. On rare occasions, Mr. Kane would enthrall us with stories of his buying trips to the wholesale districts of New York and Chicago. More frequently, however, he simply became one of the family group, entering wholeheartedly into whatever entertainment the evening afforded, expressing his pleasure at sharing our simple pastimes, and relishing the apples, cider, popcorn or other refreshment that concluded the fun.

After breakfast the next morning, if the day was rainy, the men would tarry to see what Mr. Kane had to sell. But on clear days it was necessary for them to bid him a reluctant farewell and hurry to the barn or fields, leaving my mother to attend to their purchases as well as to our other household needs.

With my mother, sisters and the hired girl gathered around, Mr. Kane would pick up his pack and bring it to the center of the living room floor. He would draw up a straight chair and sit down beside the pack. With blunt fingers, well hardened to the task, he would untie the two huge knots which secured the bundle and spread the large square of blue denim neatly on the floor. Then he'd untie the knots of an inner cover of immaculate, white ducking and reveal another smaller bundle and a number of flat boxes which he would remove from an assortment of flat dry goods on the bottom of the pack. The flat goods included sheets, pillowslips, red and blue checkered tablecloths, tablecloths of linen or damask with matching napkins, bath towels, tea towels, roller toweling, white linen, initialed and bandana handkerchiefs, doilies, centerpieces, bolts of dainty lace and insertion in various widths and patterns, sometimes one or two patterns of gingham or calico, bright sofa cushion covers or any other such article which happened to be the fashion.

These items Mr. Kane would lay out one by one for my mother's inspection. She must take something, he would

insist, in payment for his food and night's lodging. My mother would smilingly refuse, selecting linens, laces, handkerchiefs or toweling that she intended to purchase. Perhaps then, Mr. Kane would suggest, my mother would permit the children to accept a gift. My mother would agree to this, provided our choice wasn't too expensive. Mr. Kane would next open the boxes which contained his finest merchandise. He'd watch my mother's expression closely as she admired the fine dresser sets or exquisite pieces of imported Irish linen. If she admired something in particular, but didn't include it among the articles she intended to purchase, he would lay it aside carefully and open the small bundle.

This was the moment my sisters and I had waited for. The small bundle usually contained a heterogeneous collection of useful household articles and occasional toys. Combs, fine-toothed combs, clothes brushes, hair brushes, tooth brushes, scented soap, shaving soap, curling irons, kid curlers, decorated squares of chamois skin which were the "powder rags" of the day, wire and rubber hairpins, safety pins, straight pins, needles of assorted sizes, boxes of Clark's O.N.T. thread in all colors, crochet needles and cotton, tatting shuttles, red, blue, and pink rickrack, bias tape, garter rubber, suspenders, socks, sock supporters and stockings, all, according to Mr. Kane, of the finest quality and at bargain prices. Then he would show me an assortment of beautiful hair ribbons for which I had a weakness. From these I usually selected my gift. My baby sister would usually choose a rubber kewpie doll, with a squeaking tummy, a tar-baby or Tom Tinker.

When all the purchases had been made and the gifts selected, Mr. Kane would begin to neatly repack his dry goods, talking in his pleasant, courteous manner of the pleasure of his visit and expressing his thanks for our patronage. The article which my mother had admired and that Mr. Kane had laid aside was not included in the packing. He never again referred to it but his eyes shone at the sincere pleasure and gratitude that were in my mother's expression, for well she knew that the gift belonged to her.

Parting with Mr. Kane was painful, for he was our friend and we never knew how long it would be before we

saw him again. For me the pain lasted in a very realistic way for his scented soap smarted my face, his kid curlers pulled my hair and made me uncomfortable while I slept, and I had to stand for tiresome intervals to have my gingham dresses fitted. But my school dresses, bright with rickrack, and the watered hair ribbons filled me, for many weeks, with warm memories of Mr. Kane. About our household were other evidences of his visit. The "hands" had crisp new blue and red bandanas to keep the sun from burning their necks, my father had the strong suspenders he liked to work in, my older sister and the hired girl had new chamois skins to powder their noses, my mother's chestnut hair was fastened with rubber hairpins, my brothers had shaving soap and initialed handkerchiefs to thrill them anew with their approaching manhood, and my baby sister squeaked her rubber doll until the squeak was gone, then proceeded to cut her teeth on it.

These conditions and events recurred each day in the many other rural homes throughout Indiana which the pack peddler visited. I do not know whether Mr. Kane was the only pack peddler at that time in this section of the country. Possibly he was not, but I'm sure he typifies them all.

Franklin, Indiana

FOLKLORE NEWS

By ERNEST W. BAUGHMAN

New York Folklore Society

The New York Folklore Society held its annual meeting September 6, 1947, in conjunction with the annual convention of the New York Historical Association, at Cooperstown, New York. Professor Harold W. Thompson, president of the society, presided as the following program was given:

"Tales of the Brookfield Hills," Mr. George W. Walter

"Folk Heroes of the Upper Susquehanna," Miss Janice C. Neal

"Kilroy and His Buddies," Mrs. Agnes Underwood

"Songs of the Marines," Mr. Edward H. Sargent, Jr.

FOLKLORE FROM SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO

(PART II)

By DOROTHY J. BAYLOR

This is the second, and concluding, installment taken from *Socorro Folklore*. For the first part, see *HF* 6:91-100.—The Editor.

I. HISTORY AND CUSTOMS

1. *The Naming of Socorro*

When the Spaniards were coming over the hill, they saw a little town and they were hungry because they had no food to eat. The Indians fed them corn and food, and they said the Lord had helped them; and that is where Socorro got its name. The word *socorro* means help.

2. *The Captive*

Told in Spanish to Arthur Castillo by his father.

When Gabriel Penia was six years old, he was out caring for the oxen at "Standing Rock," which is at the foot of "M" mountain. He was taken captive by the Navajo Indians who lived at the alamos. The pueblo was situated close to Magdalena. He lived with them for twelve years. After peace was declared between the Indians and the settlers from Socorro, the Indians brought him home. The following morning he escaped but was overtaken before reaching the Navajo pueblo. To satisfy his loneliness, his real parents took him to see his Indian "Tota" and Indian "Na-na." His real parents had a hard time to break him of his Indian way and to keep him from returning to the Indians. He passed away just a few years ago. He was never called by his real name, but always by his nickname, "Captive."

3. *Early Warfare*

During a battle of the early settlers the men who were armed with slingshots followed these commands: Hand to sack, rock to sling, spin the sling, fire!

4. A. *Horsemanship Game*

A long time ago during fiesta time, the Mexicans around Socorro had a daring sport like a contest, and every man

who possessed a horse could enter it. They would bury a live rooster with only its head sticking out. The contestants would ride by at full speed and try to jerk the rooster's head off. The one who succeeded would win.

4. B. *Horsemanship Game*

This is another Mexican custom that was a winter sport. Many years ago the Plaza was a lake, and in the winter when it froze, the men on horses would run to it and see who could slide the farthest.

II. WITCHES

5. *Use of Hair in Bewitching*

Years ago the women believed that when they combed their hair, the witches could get ahold of the hair that fell and would turn the hair into something to harm them; so they gathered every hair that fell and put it in between the bricks in the wall so the witches couldn't get it.

6. *Finding a Witch*

To find out whether some people were witches or not they would put some scissors like a cross under a cushion. If the one that sat there was a witch, she couldn't get up until someone removed the scissors.

7. *Discovering Witchcraft*

The way to find out if a witch has something against you is to put some mistletoe under the pillow; then if it is gone in the morning, that means that the witch has something against you and will come back later to do some harm.

8. *Man Who Could See Witches*

Told in Spanish to Marion Esquivel by her father.

Only a certain man by the name of John could find out who a witch was. When he would see a witch out flying at night, all he had to do was to make a cross on the ground, and the witch would come down. She usually begged for forgiveness and begged the man not to tell anyone who she was.

9. *Witch as Chicken*

Told to Marion Esquivel by Anne Esquivel.

A chicken had been hanging around the yard of a woman and her daughter. She had been coming there every day, and she would even be looking through the screen door at

night. Then the woman and her daughter decided to catch the chicken. They did, and they beat her and hit her with sticks until the poor chicken couldn't move. The next day a woman whom these two had suspected was a witch was all beaten up, and she stayed in bed because she couldn't move.

10. *Witch as Cat*

There was a witch that had a son. Her son was always drunk. She would turn herself into a cat and watch him. She would always be around rubbing against his boots.

One night he was outside drunk, and the same cat came again. He said he was tired of having a cat following him around; so he took his gun and shot the cat. He shot him in the leg. Later when he got home he found out that his mother had been wounded in the leg.

III. RELIGIOUS STORIES

11. *Pride Rebuked*

Told in Spanish to Marion Esquivel by her mother.

There was a lady who used to go to church every day. She thought her soul was pure. One Sunday in church she asked God to have something appear before the people to show them how her soul was. Then a black dog walked across the altar. The woman was surprised and fainted.

12. *Miracle*

Some people did not want their daughter to become a nun, and so one day she was all ready to leave, when she walked out and saw Jesus in the upstairs window. She went in and called her dad and mother. After they saw it, they approved of their daughter's desire to become a nun. They went and told the priest of Belen what they could see on the window; so he ordered them to have the glass removed and to take it to the church. When they got to the church with the glass, they could not see Jesus; but they had already put another glass on the window, and they could see it. They say that it is not on the glass, that it is on the sky; and it reflects on the glass. I have gone to see it several times, and I have always seen Jesus; but there are some that say that they see different saints. If you desire to wash the window you may do so.

IV. TREASURE STORIES

13. *Lost Gold Field*

There was a man out taking a walk on the side of a mountain and found something that looked like gold. After he had gone into town and found out it was really gold, he could never find the place where he had found the first nugget although he had looked for it about a month.

14. A. *Ghost Guards Treasure*

This story was told by a man now living in Magdalena. It was at the time when he used to go out looking for buried treasure. At this particular time his arrows pointed out treasure, and so he started digging. He dug down about seven feet when he was terrified at the sight of a man who had been buried there. The man was still alive. He was so frightened that he left without turning back. Later he returned and found that the treasure had been dug and carried away. His explanation is that this man had been buried there to guard the treasure, but he had been frightened and the treasure had been carried away.

14. B. *Ghost Guards Treasure*

Told in Spanish to Eloisa Martinez by her father.

Three brothers had a load of gold bars, and there was a war going on somewhere in the plains by Val Verde, New Mexico. They decided to bury this gold. People say that it is buried somewhere between the mountains near Tokay, New Mexico.

Many have gone to see if they can find it, but always they miss. They never can look for it in the daytime, only at night. Some of those who have gone have said that when midnight comes around, three armed men on big horses gallop down and want to trample them.

One of the men who had gone for the treasure had his fortune told. He was told that he had missed the treasure by only twenty-five feet. He also was told that the one who is to find the treasure isn't even born yet.

15. *Treasure Transformed*

Told in Spanish to Rosie Montoya by her mother.

A man claims this story to be true. There were men who had buried a treasure and this man was very sure where it

was. He came to town to look for another man to help him. When the two came to the place where the treasure was, it had turned to black coal, no longer gold. It is said that one of the men envied the other; so the gold had turned to coal.

16. *Treasure Comes to Lazy Man*

Told in Spanish to Eloisa Martinez by her father.

This man was the laziest of all men. He always said that what was to be his would always fall in through the chimney of the house.

One day he went out to get wood and there he found a pot of gold. When he came back, he told his wife about it. Of course, his wife asked him why he hadn't brought it. He said that he'd go for it when he had time. His wife, not able to keep anything secret, told her neighbors, who happened to be some of these rich people that want everything for themselves. When the rich man heard this, he immediately set forth to get it. Well, he found this thing—a pot of gold—though he didn't open it until he got home. When he did open it, he found out that the pot was full of dirt. He was so angry that he decided to put the pot of dirt down the lazy man's chimney. Almost at midnight the wife of the lazy man heard a big noise at the fireplace. The wife wanted to get up, but the lazy man told her not to bother until morning when she got up. In the morning when the wife got up, she saw a pile of gold by the fireplace. She told her husband what had fallen down the chimney and he answered, "I told you that what was to be mine would come down the chimney."

V. BURIED-ALIVE STORIES

17. *Thieves Discover Live Burial*

Contributed by Eloisa Martinez.

Once a rich woman who had been sick for quite a while had a trance. This means prolonged sleep-like condition. The people that she lived with or her relatives thought that she was dead, and they made arrangements for the funeral. They also put on all the jewels that she possessed. When she was taken to the cemetery to be buried, two thieves saw all those jewels and decided to get them. She was buried in the evening.

When the two thieves went for the jewels, they had to dig up the grave again, of course. When they were opening the coffin, the woman looked up and talked to them and told them that she was alive. She told them that all of the jewels she had on were theirs, for they had saved her life.

All this happened during the night. One of the thieves went ahead to tell her family. Of course they were very surprised and all came back with him. The husband agreed that the two thieves should keep all the jewels.

18. Tragedy Discovered at Later Burial

Once a woman had died a long time before one of her relatives died. The men who buried this relative did not know that this woman was buried there; so they went ahead and dug another grave on top of that one. When they saw the coffin, they opened it; and they saw only a web, but they could make out the outline of the dead person and that it was a woman. Her head was turned down and her hands were on her head. All her relatives grieved for her, but it was too late. They knew that they had buried her alive. This is another case of a person who was buried in a trance.

19. Live Burial Discovered Too Late

Told by Mrs. Laura Wetterhus to Dorris Olson.

There was a very beautiful woman that died on April 20, 1936. She was the wife of a prominent businessman. She had a very beautiful funeral, and nearly the whole town was there. She had beautiful long blonde hair that hung down past her waist. Her fingernails were like cat claws and they were very beautiful. After she'd been buried for three days, her husband went to the mortuary and told the undertaker that he knew his wife wasn't dead and he wanted them to dig her up. After quite a bit of persuasion the undertaker agreed to dig her up. They went to the graveyard and dug her coffin up and opened it. Inside they saw the coffin full of blood. The lady's hair was pulled out by the roots and her fingernails were broken and bloody and full of hair. The top of her coffin was scratched and scarred. She had a look of horror on her face, and her eyes were glassy-looking. The woman was not dead when she was buried.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS TALES

20. *Death from Fear, When Clothing is Caught*

Told in Spanish by Lucia Ortiz to Tom Crespín.

There was a man who didn't believe that God was present at the altar. Two other men bet him ten dollars that he wouldn't go in the church and drive a nail on the altar. He went in the church wearing a long coat. When he drove the nail in the altar, he nailed his coat to the altar. When he stood up and the coat pulled him down, he fainted.

(This seems to be the story of the man who goes to the graveyard on a bet to stick a knife or sword into a certain grave. He drives the knife through his cuff or through the tail of his long coat and dies when he tries to get up. See *HF* 6; 5, 107; *HFB* 1:59.—The Editor)

21. *Death from Fear*

Told in Spanish to Marion Esquivel by her mother.

Some people dared a priest to walk in a church at midnight without any lights and hammer a nail in the wall. They heard the hammer once; then there was a long silence. The people waited. When they walked in, they found the priest dead. The people thought that he saw or imagined he saw something so terrible that it scared him to death.

22. *Learning English*

Told in Spanish by Tom Crespín to Arthur Castillo.

There was a Spanish fellow who was learning English. The first word that he learned was "yes." He went uptown and a fellow asked him, "Do you want to fight?"

He said, "Yes." So he got a beating. He went back to the fellow who was teaching him English. The English teacher taught him the word "no."

The same fellow who gave him the beating asked him, "Did you have enough?"

He said, "No." So the man gave him another beating. Finally he decided to stick to his own language, which was Spanish.

(This story is somewhat similar to Type 1697 *We three; For Money*. Three men know only three phrases of the language of the country where they are traveling, and they get accused of murder because of answers they give.—The Editor)

VII. FOLK BELIEFS

(All translated from the Spanish)

A. Devil and Supernatural

1. If you want to talk with the devil, make a hole where two roads intersect. Bury a rooster alive with his head projecting from the ground. At twelve o'clock at night the devil will come to see what you want.

2. If the baby cries when baptized, it means it has scared the devil away.

3. Paint your doors and windows blue to keep away bad spirits.

4. If you want to do magic, kill a black cat and collect all the vertebrae of his backbone. Get one with your teeth and see yourself in the mirror. Keep changing vertebrae until you get one that vanishes your image from the mirror. Then you can do any kind of magic you wish.

5. If you want to talk to a dead person, you go at midnight and light two candles at his feet. As soon as the candles are about out, the dead person comes out and talks to you. The man has to be brave enough to stay and listen.

6. When you go to a funeral, always throw some dirt into the grave; for if you don't the dead person will come to visit you at night.

7. When a person dies, touch his feet so he will not visit you at night and pull your feet.

B. Death Omens

8. If birds or bats get in the house, it means that there will be a death in the house within the next eight days.

9. People believed that when a person would die and had one foot shorter than the other that meant that another relative of his was going to die.

10. Long ago people believed that when they dug up a grave and left it open over night, that meant that someone else was going to die the next day.

11. If you dream someone is getting married, some relative of yours will soon die.

12. If you dream of grapes, somebody will die.

13. If you go to a funeral and count the cars, you will be the next one to die.

14. When you see a spider on the wall going up, you'll have a long life; if it's going down, you'll have a short life.

C. Bad Luck

15. If you are traveling in a car and a rabbit runs across the road in front of you, you'd better spit, or a tire will blow out.

16. If you are crossing a path or road and a black cat goes in front of you, you have to go back until the cat gets to the end of the road. If you don't, you will have bad luck.

17. If you break a mirror, you will have seven years of bad luck.

18. If a baby is asleep, don't watch him. It's bad luck.

19. If you dream of muddy water, you will have bad luck the next day.

20. On her wedding day the bride is not supposed to see her groom. It will bring bad luck to both of them.

21. If three persons light a cigar with one match, it's bad luck.

22. It's considered bad luck to sit at the table with thirteen people.

23. To step over a broom.

24. To put shoes on the bed.

25. For a group of people to split up and go around a post.

26. To comb your hair in the dark.

27. To put your left shoe on first.

28. Two people drying on the same towel.

29. For one person to open a knife and the other one to close it.

30. To give a person a knife.

31. To give a person a pin.

32. To carry an ax through the house.

33. To walk under a ladder.

34. Sweeping after dark.

35. To cut your nails.

36. Putting your clothes on wrong side out.

37. For a dog to howl at night.

38. Misplacing your hat.

D. Dreams

39. If you want some real nice dreams, set a glass of water at the head of your bed. The Guardian Angel will be there.

40. At night when you go to bed and you take your shoes off, don't put them at the head of your bed or you will have bad dreams.

41. If you have a dream at night and talk about it before breakfast, the dream will come true.

42. When you dream of falling and do not wake up before you hit the bottom, you will never wake up.

43. When you put a piece of wedding cake under your pillow, you'll dream of getting married.

44. If you put the bride's bouquet stems under your mother's pillow, you'll dream of who you'll marry.

45. If you want some sleep, take a glass of water with a pair of scissors on top of the glass, making a cross with the scissors. Then set it under the bed.

46. If you dream of grapes, somebody will die.

47. If you dream someone is getting married, some relative of yours will soon die.

E. Guests

48. If the cat is washing his face, expect company.

49. When you drop the dish towel, expect company.

50. When you drop the dish rag, somebody uglier than you is coming to visit you.

51. If you drop a tablespoon, a tall lady is coming to visit you.

52. If you have a piece of string or thread hanging on your clothes, it means that you will have a date.

53. If you find a bobby pin, it means that you will have a date.

F. Weather

54. If the crickets chirp, it will rain.

55. If you see very many terrapins, it is going to rain.

56. Kill a snake and turn it on its back; and if it stays it will rain.

57. It will rain if you see bugs crawling out of a canyon.

58. It will rain if you see a wedding ring around the moon.

59. If you wash the windows, it will rain.

60. The Lord promised the people of Polvadera that it would rain before the tenth of August, or if it didn't rain before that time, it would become a desert.

61. If it's hailing, cross two pans to make a cross; and the hail will stop.

62. When it's hailing, pour salt in a cross outside.

63. When the geese fly south, it will get cold.

G. Punishments

64. If you throw salt on purpose, when you die you will have to come and pick it up with your eyelashes.

65. When you give something and take it away again, a horn will grow on your forehead.

66. When you are cooking and scrape the frying pan, it will rain on your wedding day.

H. Physical Signs

67. If your right ear wiggles when you are talking, you are lying.

68. If your right hand itches in the palm, you'll receive money.

69. When your left ear burns and it is red, someone is talking about you.

I. Animals

70. If a turtle takes hold of your finger, it will not let go until it thunders.

71. If you kill a snake, hang it on the fence and the next day there will be two of them.

72. Pull a hair out of a horse's tail by the roots and put it in a barrel of water and the hair will turn into a little worm.

J. Miscellaneous

73. If you see a white butterfly, you have a letter at the post office.

74. If you go to bed singing, you will wake up crying.

75. If you cut your hair in the moonlight, it will grow better.

76. If a baby is sleeping and starts to laugh, the angels of heaven are with him.

77. If you get dressed in bed, a bull will follow you.

78. Whenever people hear strange noises, like the dragging of chains, in an old house, people claim that if the owner of the house is dead there is some treasure in the house.

VIII. REMEDIES

(All translated from the Spanish)

1. If you have the nosebleed, take a few drops of your blood and mix it with a little bit of lime. Then make a cross on your forehead with this mixture, and it will stop the nosebleed.

2. Other nosebleed cures:

Keep a red string tied around your neck.

Put a penny under your upper lip, and the bleeding will stop.

Put a brown cigarette paper under your upper lip.

Wet the back of your neck, and the bleeding will stop.

Put a silver coin under your tongue.

3. One way to get rid of a wart is to take a string and tie knots in it, one for every wart. Then take the string and put it under a rock. When the string rots, the wart will go away.

4. If you have warts, steal your mother's washrag and hide it; and the warts will go away.

5. Rub a wart with two broom straws until it bleeds. Cover them with mud, and the wart will disappear.

6. To cure a wart find an old bone and rub it on the wart; then put the bone back where you found it. The bone must be in exactly the same place, or it will not cure the wart.

7. Evil Eye: When a person likes a baby very much and plays with it, sometimes after the person is gone the baby gets sick, has a high fever and vomits. This is caused by the Evil Eye. The same person has to come and mix salt and water and spray the salt water on the baby's face.

8. Evil Eye: Put a coral necklace around your neck in order to keep away the Evil Eye.

9. When a baby is cutting teeth, they say that if you put a string of rattlesnake bones around the baby's neck it won't

be sick. (Of course the bones will have to be boiled over and over before putting them on.)

10. When a baby is cutting teeth, get a seed from a squash. Make a small cross and hang it around the baby's neck.

11. They say that if you rub a baby on the stomach with an egg and it breaks, it means the baby has a pain somewhere in its stomach.

12. Rub a raw broken egg on the chest of the sick person; and where the yolk breaks, that is where the pain is.

13. If you have a very high fever, put an egg near your head; and if the egg cooks, the fever will go away.

14. Tie a black rag around your neck if you have a sore throat, and it will cure it.

15. When a person gets bitten by a rattlesnake, the thing to do is to grab it by both the tail and the head and bite it in the middle. The poison of the person's mouth will kill the snake and cure the bite.

16. When you have a pain in your legs, put your shoes beneath the mattress.

17. If your hair is dead at the ends and will not grow, keep your fingernails trimmed in order to make it grow.

18. They say that if you put copper bracelets on your wrists, you won't ever feel rheumatic pains.

19. They say that if you are rheumatic, you feel it just when bad weather is coming.

Socorro High School

Socorro, New Mexico

NOTES

Readers are invited to participate in this department by using it as a clearing house for folklore information of all kinds, to report variants of stories or songs or other material given in preceding issues, or to discover from other readers variants of unpublished lore that has been collected or remembered.

OLD MAN EDMONDS

By RUBY STAINBROOK BUTLER

During the decline of the horse and buggy era, while it was still necessary for native Hoosiers to invent recreation by entertaining themselves and their friends with their own wit and verbal extravagances, an elderly farmer, affectionately known as "Old Man Edmonds," lived east of Franklin, Indiana, on the Shelbyville road. As an inventor and relater of tall tales Mr. Edmonds was an artist supreme and was justly proud of his creative ability.

When Old Man Edmonds "got off a good one" the story spread through the community like a grass fire in August and immediately set many households to telling every Edmonds story that could be remembered. Like most tall tale relaters who gain wide prominence, many stories are attributed to Mr. Edmonds which are not his. This is unfortunate, for Mr. Edmonds' stories need neither misrepresentation nor embellishment to make them rare gems of American folk humor. As an entertainer and contributor to the pleasures of his local contemporaries Mr. Edmonds has few rivals.

The following anecdotes are related as they were told to me. Doubtless there are those who may have heard variations of the tales. But those who remember Mr. Edmonds will recognize them as typical of his countless other yarns which produced such wholesome delight.

1. No Time to Lie

A neighbor was driving along the road and saw Mr. Edmonds, in his buggy, urging his horse swiftly down his lane. Reaching the gate he turned briskly into the highway headed for Franklin. The neighbor hailed Mr. Edmonds, asked him where he was going in such a hurry, and begged to be told a story.

Mr. Edmonds slowed long enough to get the drift of what his friend had to say. Then he clucked to his horse and called back over his shoulder:

"Sorry. I ain't got time to tell you a story. Dungan's fish pond caught on fire last night and I'm goin' into town after the vet. He may get out there in time to save the fish that are still alive."

2. *The Wonderful Hunt*

Two men were granted permission to go squirrel hunting on Mr. Edmonds' farm. A few hours later, while working in a field, Mr. Edmonds saw the hunters coming toward him, discouraged and without game.

"Did you get anything, boys?" Mr. Edmonds asked.

One hunter shook his head ruefully and the other replied: "Not a thing. We shot at several squirrels though."

Mr. Edmonds looked sympathetic and a strange gleam appeared in his eyes:

"Well, I swan. That's too bad. I guess I'm a natural born hunter an' I jest can't miss. Why one evenin', 'long about sundown, I was walkin' through the woods with my gun and there, plain as the nose on your face, was a whole bevy of quail that 'ad gone to roost on the limb of an ol', dead tree. That there tree hung clean out over the creek. I upped and shot at them birds, split the limb with my bullet, and caught ever' one of their toes in the crack of the limb. They fluttered around so much, tryin' to get loose, that the limb broke off and fell smack dab into the water. Not wantin' to lose my birds I throwed my gun down an' waded into the stream after 'em. Well sir, you'd never believe it but my pants got so blamed full of fish that a suspender button popped off, hit a rabbit in the fence corner, an' killed him deader than a doornail. That night I et quail, fish an' rabbit for supper. Yes boys, I'm a natural born hunter and' I jest can't miss."

(For the first story, "No time to Lie" see *HFB* 1:13, 54. For the "Wonderful Hunt" see *HFB* 1:20-21; 41-42.—The Editor)

Franklin, Indiana

THE LITTLE OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY

By LEE MARTIN, EVA H. MCINTOSH, MILDRED NEWCOMB

The following cumulative tale was new to me when I heard it from Miss Mildred Newcomb this past summer. Does anyone know its history or any of its background? These three variants show many interesting, if minor, differences within the comparatively strict cumulative form.—The Editor.

Colorado

Contributed by Lee Martin, age twelve, Denver, Colorado

There was an old lady—she swallowed a fly.
I don't know why she swallowed a fly.
Poor old lady, I thought she would die.

She swallowed a spider.
It wriggled and wriggled and wriggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat up the fly.
But I don't know why she swallowed the fly.
Poor old lady, I thought she would die.

She swallowed a bird. How absurd! She swallowed a bird.
She swallowed the bird to eat up the spider
That wriggled and wriggled and wriggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat up the fly.
But I don't know why she swallowed the fly.
Poor old lady, I thought she would die.

She swallowed a dog. What a hog! She swallowed a dog.
She swallowed the dog to eat up the bird.
How absurd! She swallowed the bird
To eat up the spider
That wriggled and wriggled and wriggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat up the fly.
But I don't know why she swallowed the fly.
Poor old lady, I thought she would die.

She swallowed a cow. I don't know how
She swallowed a cow. She swallowed the cow
To eat up the dog. What a hog!
She swallowed the dog to eat up the bird.
How absurd! She swallowed the bird
To eat up the spider

That wriggled and wriggled and wriggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat up the fly.
But I don't know why she swallowed the fly.
Poor old lady, I thought she would die.

She swallowed a horse—she died, of course.

Georgia

Contributed by Eva H. McIntosh, Carbondale, Illinois,
who heard it from a friend from Georgia.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a fly.
She swallowed a fly—I don't know why.
Poor little old lady, I hope she don't die.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a spider.
She swallowed a spider that wiggled inside her.
She swallowed a spider to eat the fly.
She swallowed a fly—I don't know why.
Poor little old lady, I hope she don't die.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a bird.
She swallowed a bird—have you heard?
She swallowed a bird to eat the spider,
To eat the spider that wiggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat the fly.
She swallowed the fly—I don't know why.
Poor little old lady, I hope she don't die.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a cat.
She swallowed a cat—imagine that!
She swallowed a cat to eat the bird.
She swallowed a bird—have you heard?
She swallowed a bird to eat the spider,
To eat the spider that wiggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat the fly.
She swallowed a fly—I don't know why.
Poor little old lady, I hope she don't die.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a dog.
She swallowed a dog 'most big as a hog.
She swallowed a dog to eat the cat.
She swallowed a cat—imagine that!
She swallowed a cat to eat the bird.

She swallowed a bird—have you heard?
She swallowed a bird to eat the spider,
To eat the spider that wiggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat the fly.
She swallowed the fly, I don't know why.
Poor little old lady, I hope she don't die.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a cow.
She swallowed a cow—I don't know how.
She swallowed a cow to eat the dog.
She swallowed the dog 'most big as a hog.
She swallowed a dog to eat the cat.
She swallowed a cat—imagine that.
She swallowed a cat to eat the bird.
She swallowed a bird—have you heard.
She swallowed the bird to eat the spider,
To eat the spider that wiggled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to eat the fly.
She swallowed the fly—I don't know why.
Poor little old lady, I hope she don't die.

Poor little old lady, she swallowed a horse.
She died, of course!

Ohio

Contributed by Miss Mildred Newcomb, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio. She heard it from Lyman Peck who had just returned from Air Corps duty in the Pacific Theater.

A little old lady swallowed a fly.
I don't know why she swallowed the fly.
Poor little old lady, I hope she won't die.

The little old lady swallowed a spider.
He wiggled and wiggled around inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly,
But I don't know why she swallowed the fly.
Poor little old lady, I hope she won't die.

The little old lady swallowed a bird—
That's what I heard, she swallowed a bird.
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled, etc.

The little old lady swallowed a cat—
Imagine that, swallowed a cat.
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird;
That's what I heard.
She swallowed the bird, etc.

The little old lady swallowed a dog.
She went the whole hog: she swallowed a dog.
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat—
Imagine that, etc.

The little old lady swallowed a cow—
I don't know how—she swallowed a cow!
She swallowed the cow to catch the dog.
She went the whole hog when she, etc.

The little old lady swallowed a horse.
(Pause)
She's dead, of course.

FAST SQUIRRELS

By MARTHA HEFLIN

I have heard my father tell this story many times. He lives at Franklin, Indiana.

It was near the end of last hunting season. The squirrels were getting smart and fast. Man, those were the fastest squirrels I have ever seen! Why, you'd take perfect aim and when those squirrels would see you fire, they'd run away from the bullet. I had hunted all day, having no luck whatsoever. Finally, I hit on a working plan. Of course it took two bullets to do it, but it was worth it. I bet you think I fired first; then as the squirrel ran from that bullet, I'd fire a second one in front of him, and he ran into it. Well, you're wrong. I fired the first time, and the squirrel ran; then I fired in front of him. The squirrel would dodge the second bullet, and he'd run headlong into the path of the first bullet!

Franklin, Indiana

BOOK REVIEWS

The Folktale, Stith Thompson. New York: The Dryden Press, 1946. 510 pages. \$6.00.

This very important study serves to summarize the great amount of labor which has gone into the collection, archiving, and analysis of the folktale. But the net result of the overview is to make the reader keenly aware of the formidable array of still unsolved problems. It is clear, furthermore, that this will remain the standard text in the field for many years, for there are few scholars so well equipped by temperament and training to undertake a similar task. Professor Thompson now has four major folktale publications to his credit: *The Type Index*, *The Motif Index*, *The Tales of the North American Indians*, *The Folktale*. It is a production record difficult to match in painstaking labor and usefulness; scholars everywhere are his debtors.

The Folktale deals with such a vast, unwieldy subject that it is essential to reduce the topic into units sufficiently small and unified that they are suitable for analysis. Thus the book falls into four parts: Nature and Forms of the Folktale, The Folktale from India to Ireland, The Folktale in Primitive Culture, Studying the Folktale. These divisions are not entirely satisfactory for there is, naturally, some overlapping and the order of treatment cannot always be entirely logical. The difficulties of treating the folktale historically, geographically, scientifically, and aesthetically at one and the same time require the skill of a juggler keeping four balls in the air.

The problems of definition are treated early and adequately; questions of the "boundaries" of folklore are outlined, the various theories set forth and evaluated objectively. In Part IV, these and related problems are given much fuller consideration.

Having mapped out very briefly the geographic, linguistic, and cultural aspects of the countries from Ireland to India, the author proceeds to analyze the "complex" tales occurring therein by breaking a large number of them down into their most frequently used motifs and discussing these as they appear all over the world. The general topics are: supernatural adversaries, supernatural helpers, magic and marvels, lovers and married couples, tasks and quests, faithfulness, good and bad relatives, the higher powers, the three

worlds. In addition the märchen and related narrative forms, the realistic tales, and the history of the complex tales are treated in this section. Each section is divided into subheads. For example, supernatural adversaries provide these variations: the dragon slayer, ogres and witches, vampires and revenants, devils and demons, death in person. Here, as everywhere, Professor Thompson has attempted to record the complete bibliography of the scholarship on the tales and on the motifs. In many cases, the conclusions of the monographs are summarized.

In treatment, "The Simple Tale" (Chapter III) covers again the geographic range from Ireland to India, and shows these sub-types: jests and anecdotes, animal tales, formula tales, legends and traditions. For each of these headings there are many subdivisions which do not appear in the Table of Contents. For example, Legends and Traditions are discussed in this arrangement:

- A. Mythological legends
- B. Marvelous Beings and Objects
 - 1. Marvelous Animals
 - 2. Other Marvelous Creatures
 - 3. Marvelous Objects
- C. Return from the Dead
- D. Marvelous Powers and Occurrences
 - 1. Transformations and Disenchantment
 - 2. Other Magic Powers
 - 3. Marvelous Occurrences
- E. Treasure Trove
- F. Legends of Places and Persons

I call attention to this elaborate breakdown, for it differs markedly from the order established earlier by Dr. Thompson in both his schematic arrangements in the *Type Index* and in the *Motif Index*, and constitutes a third pattern, based, this time, somewhat on literary form as well as on subject matter.

Brief summaries of the folktale in ancient literature and the presence of European materials as folktales in other countries and continents end with a useful chart showing the number of borrowings of European-Asiatic tales by Indonesians, Africans, and American Indians. The sixty pages of Part Three deal entirely with American Indian tales; in

this brief compass, the chief motifs, patterns, and characteristics of the "areas" are discussed. Much is abstracted from Professor Thompson's earlier studies and from more recent theses done by his students.

Part IV on the Theories of the Folktale will be one of the most helpful sections of the book for those who are either new to the field of folklore theory or who wish a compact summary for their students. Much of it rightly concerns folklore in general quite as much as the folktale alone. For the first time, in an easily accessible place, in English, one may find adequate, objective restatements, often translations of the classic pronouncements on the theory, collecting, classifying and analysis of literary folklore. Two topics of current interest had to be somewhat lightly treated; the uses of folk materials and the aesthetics of the folktale.

We must bear constantly in mind that the topic is so unwieldy, the problems of arrangement and proportion so subjective that scholars using the book will raise the same objections as are usually made to an anthology of poetry—the choices cannot be entirely acceptable to everyone. But the materials are here, and if American students can be persuaded to master them, a deep debt of gratitude will be owed the author. The text must be evaluated more as a handbook than as a monograph; accordingly there are two appendixes in which are listed books on and collections of folktales and reprints of the schematic outlines of the Type and Motif indexes. Suffice it to say that most university libraries in this country where folklore courses are given lack far too many of these items which may well serve as check lists for libraries. The presence of this book should do much to encourage and advance the study of the folktale in this country; it has been long needed as the accumulator of what we know and the reminder of what we still ought to strive to do if our knowledge of this most important field is to advance.

Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan

Thelma G. James.

Rocky Mountain Tales, edited by Levette J. Davidson and Forrester Blake. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947. 292 pages. \$3.00.

Rocky Mountain Tales is a big collection of stories taken largely from printed sources: newspapers, magazines, letters, diaries, scrapbooks, biographies, and histories which were

written or published in the last one hundred years. It is evident from the numbers of stories given, from the range of the stories, and from the number of sources cited that a prodigious amount of reading was necessary to make such a collection. The selection is excellent; these are good stories, well told by a variety of authors and in a variety of styles. The styles range from the florid and highly embellished, in newspaper accounts, to the terse and laconic, in journal entries. These are more than period pieces however; they are told with real zest; and they give a wonderful picture of Rocky Mountain life and doings. For anyone who grew up on "Western" fiction this book will be a joy. Here is authentic Western fact and folklore that is far more satisfying than the synthetic Western stuff many of us developed our reading skills on. Here in one volume are stories of Indian scouts, Indian fighters, plainsmen, mountaineers, trappers, stage coach drivers, stage coach robbers, gold and silver miners, ranchers, cowboys, rustlers, horse thieves, range wars—all the glory, heroism, violence, hardship, and tragedy that we associate with the frontier.

The stories are not all folklore by any means—I should judge that considerably less than half are folktales by strict definition—but what group of people confines its oral narratives to folktales? Reminiscence of actual wonders has always been a popular pastime. These are the stories that the West is still noted for; and in a land like the Rocky Mountains the achievements of both the giant and the little man are sometimes more startling than the folklore of the region. The province of the editors is the tales of the Rockies, and they have brought forth an exciting collection.

The reader will find familiar names in the book, and he will become acquainted with many more that he will be glad to know about. A whole chapter is devoted to "Old Jim Bridger," trapper, Indian scout, guide, mountaineer supreme. Jim Baker, Jim Beckwourth, Bat Masterson, "Dog" Kelley, Tom Horn, Bob Meldrum—all appear. There is a chapter on Sergeant O'Keefe, "The Pikes Peak Prevaricator" and operator of the weather station at Pikes Peak.

Rocky Mountain Tales is a skillful intermingling of fact and folklore.

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Joint membership in the Hoosier Folklore Society and the American Folklore Society is available at a special rate of five dollars a year to Indiana residents and to Indiana schools and libraries. Individual members receive HOOSIER FOLKLORE, THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE and MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY as issued.

Institutional members (schools and libraries) receive HOOSIER FOLKLORE and THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE.

Applications for membership and membership dues for 1947 should be mailed promptly to Mrs. William Hugh Jansen, Treasurer, Hoosier Folklore Society, 729 E. Hunter, Bloomington, Indiana.

Members are urged to secure new members for the society and to contribute manuscripts for publication.

STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS OF PERIODICALS REFERRED TO IN NOTES AND ARTICLES

CFQ =CALIFORNIA FOLKLORE QUARTERLY

HF =HOOSIER FOLKLORE

HFB =HOOSIER FOLKLORE BULLETIN

JAFL=JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE

MAFS=MEMOIRS OF THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY

NYFQ=NEW YORK FOLKLORE QUARTERLY

SFQ =SOUTHERN FOLKLORE QUARTERLY